

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 L-03 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01 RSR-01 /081 W

----- 042859

R 240942Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7555

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

DOD

CINCPAC

CINCPACREPPHIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 9747

DEFENSE FOR DIA ALSO, CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, RP

SUBJECT: MUSLIM DISSIDENCE IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

REF: A. MANILA 8864

B. MANILA 9068

C. MANILA 9540 (NOTAL)

D. MANILA 9579 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: SECURITY SITUATION IN SOUTHERN PHILS  
LARGELY UNCHANGED. EIGHTY INCIDENTS WERE REPOGUED TO  
EMBASSY FROM JULY 30 TO AUG 21, MOSTLY IN COTABATO AND  
SULU. PREVIOUSLY REPORTED SURRENDER OF 900 REBELS  
APPEARS UNFOUNDED. END SUMMARY.

1. OVERALL SECURITY SITUATION IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES  
DURING PAST THREE WEEKS HAS CHANGED LITTLE SINCE LAST  
REPORT (REF A). COTABATO (NORTH) AND SULU PROVINCES  
CONTINUE TO HAVE LARGEST NUMBER OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS.  
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FREQUENT CLASHES ALSO OCCURRED IN ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR

AND BASILAN ISLAND. ELSEWHERE IN MINDANAO SITUATION WAS RELATIVELY QUIET. PHIL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER WHO BRIEFS EMBASSY REPORTED 80 INCIDENTS DURING PERIOD JULY 30 TO AUG 21.

2. COTABATO PROVINCE IS STILL THE CENTER OF MOST REBEL ACTIVITY, HAVING 34 INCIDENTS REPORTED DURING THIS PERIOD. LARGE REBEL GROUPS CAN STILL OPERATE IN SOME PARTS OF PROVINCE AND FREQUENTLY ATTACK GOVT MILITARY AND ARMED CIVILIAN UNITS AND, OCCASIONALLY, CIVILIAN TRAFFIC ON MAJOR ROADS. MAJOR ARMED FORCES OF PHILS (AFP) OPERATION IN COASTAL BARRIO OF TRAN, LEBAK HAS ENDED. THERE HAS BEEN NO CONFIRMATION, HOWEVER, OF INITIAL REPORTS (REF B) THAT 900 REBELS SURRENDERED IN THIS AREA ON AUG 4, AND LACK OF FURTHER DETAILS SUGGESTS THAT EVENT MAY NOT HAVE OCCURRED. AT LEAST SOME TRAN REBELS, WHO HELD OUT AGAINST AFP FOR TWO MONTHS, HAVE MOVED NORTHEASTWARD INTO INTERIOR OF PROVINCE. ARMED REBEL GROUP OF MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND MEN IS REPORTEDLY IN VICINITY OF ISULAN MUNICIPALITY, AND THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THIS AREA FORCED CHRISTIAN POPULATION TO EVACUATE AND INVOLVED CIVIC ACTION-ORIENTED PHIL ARMY ENGINEER UNIT IN ITS FIRST COMBAT. FIVE PHIL ARMY BATTALIONS WHICH HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN LEBAK ARE BEING SHIFTED TO SULTAN KUDARAT/ PARANG/BULDON AREA AND ISULAN TO CONTINUE OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AGAINST REBELS WHO HAVE BEEN ACTIVE RECENTLY IN THESE MUNICIPALITIES.

3. RECENT INCREASE IN FIGHTING IN SULU PROVINCE HAS CONTINUED, PRIMARILY NEAR PHIL AIR FORCE BASE ON BONGAO ISLAND AND ON SIASI ISLAND, SOUTH OF JOLO. PHIL MARINE REINFORCEMENTS LANDED ON SIASI ON AUG 16. MARINES SUFFERED (SEVEN KIA) BUT CLAIM TO HAVE KILLED MORE THAN 75 INSURGENTS. NO MOVES AGAINST PROVINCE CAPITOL OF JOLO HAVE TAKEN PLACE.

4. DESPITE REPEATED ARMY AND MARINE OPERATIONS, THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN SITUATION ON BASILAN ISLAND.

5. INCIDENTS ARE STILL COMMON THROUGHOUT ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR PROVINCE. TWO ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN VEHICLES, IN WHICH

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13 WERE KILLED AND 7 WOUNDED, WERE REPORTED. IN DOWN-TOWN ZAMBOANGA CITY, DISORDERLY AFP TROOPS SHOT AT EACH OTHER ON SEVERAL DAYS, ACCIDENTALLY KILLING A CHINESE GIRL OF BRITISH CITIZENSHIP. THIS INCIDENT OCCURRED WHILE 32 EVANGELICAL AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS WERE IN ZAMBOANGA CITY PRIOR TO DISPERSING TO COTABATO, BASILAN AND ZAMBOANGA TO ENGAGE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RELIGIOUS WORK FOR TEN MONTHS (

FPORTED SEPTTEL).

6. COMMENT: IN SULU PROVINCE IT APPEARS THAT AFP GROUND  
UNITS HAVE MODIFIED THEIR ESSENTIALLY DEFENSIVE POSTURE  
WHICH HAS PREVAILED IN RECENT MONTHS BY SHIFTING SOME  
FORCES IN RESPONSE TO INCREASE IN REBEL ATTACKS WHICH  
BEGAN LATE JUNE. AFP HAS NOT, HOWEVER, ATTEMPTED ANY  
MAJOR OFFENSIVE AGAINST REBELS IN SULU.

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## Message Attributes

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